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AUTHOR Hilts, David J.
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ABSTRACT

In 1991, a study was conducted to determine perceptions regarding the deterrents to college attendance among adult learners in an isolated northern community. The study consisted of a survey of 40 students at the Fort Nelson campus of Northern Lights College (NLC) in British Columbia, and a follow-up interview of eight of the survey respondents. Subjects for the study were enrolled full-time at NLC during the 1990-91 academic year. Major study findings included the following: (1) 57.5% of the students surveyed indicated that lack of funding had been a major reason for delaying college entry, and 40% indicated that lack of funding could prevent students from achieving college success; (2) lack of self-confidence was cited by 32.5% of the respondents as a barrier preventing entrance into a college program; (3) over 35% of the respondents indicated that the college could help remove barriers by providing information on financial assistance (55%), reducing tuition (42.5%), providing assistance with day care (40%), and providing more useful course offerings (37.5%); and (4) the major reasons given for dropping out of college in the past were lack of self-confidence (20%), family obligations (17.5%), obtaining work (15%), and lack of funding (15%). Appendixes provide the survey instrument and interview responses. (JMC)

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BARRIERS TO ADULT LEARNERS OF AN ISOLATED NORTHERN COMMUNITY

by

David J. Hilts

A RESEARCH PROJECT

JC 920 017

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for the degree of
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Introduction

The emphasis of this research project is to determine what adult learners of a small, isolated, northern community perceive to be deterrents, concerns, or reasons which may have prevented them from entering one of a variety of full-time programs at Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus. This community college is one of nine campuses situated throughout the northern third of British Columbia, with the majority of the campuses which comprise Northern Lights College being situated in larger communities south of Fort Nelson.

My positions at Northern Lights College in Fort Nelson, British Columbia, are those of Instructor and Coordinator of Student Services/Counsellor. Because of these positions, I am afforded the opportunity to deal with adult learners who come to the college from a wide variety of backgrounds and for different personal reasons. Of particular interest to me are the reasons these individuals have for not entering into a full-time college program sooner, or for not entering a program at all.

I feel this research project is significant for three reasons. To begin with, we at Northern Lights College are fully aware that our role in the community is changing. Our scope is no longer limited to providing of short evening courses or workshops on such topics as sausage making or cake decorating, such as was the case in the college's earlier days. Now, we are continually asked to meet the demands of industry in the Fort Nelson

area in such fields as computer technology, communication and public relations skills, and numerous other issues related to a resource-based community such as Fort Nelson. Furthermore, Northern Lights College offers a variety of full-time programs that include such areas as Adult Basic Education, Early Childhood Education, Office Administration, University Transfer, and a university-coordinated program to train teachers for northern British Columbia. Thus, the administration and instructional staff at the college feel we are making a good attempt to provide a variety of programs to meet the needs of this diverse community.

The second reason that I feel this research project is significant is that we do not know of all of the external forces that exist for the people of Fort Nelson that can act as deterrents to the meeting of people's academic or vocational goals. As I mentioned earlier, my position as counsellor allows me to be in contact with virtually all of the full-time and most of the part-time students of the college at one time or another, and, because of this, I have become quite familiar with such perceived or real deterrents as financial need, daycare needs, or not previously having the desire or need to come to the college. In addition, while I realize these are all valid and may often be the reason or reasons for a person not pursuing his or her education, I also question how things such as the dislike for a particular instructor, the fear of a college setting, problems with transportation, or the lack of spouse and family support may enter into the category of educational deterrents.

The third major reason that I feel this project is significant is because of the community of Fort Nelson itself. To be more precise, Fort Nelson is a northern, isolated community of approximately 5000 people. The nearest community with more than one hundred inhabitants and a gas station for services, is a four-hour drive to the south, or a seven-hour drive to the north-west. In addition, Fort Nelson is a resource-based community where shift-work is the norm and an attitude of macho-pioneerhood exists

among many of the people who make a living working in the oil and gas fields, or in the timber and lumber industry.

In addition, the community is very diverse in its cultures, and has representation from numerous ethnic groups such as Asians, East Indians, Aboriginal Canadians, and people from various regions of Canada. As to the demography of the community, Fort Nelson is a fairly young community where many inhabitants come to work, make money, and leave - thus making the community quite transient.

For these three reasons, I feel this research is very significant, as it provides me with insights and perspectives as to what the people of Fort Nelson deem to be barriers or deterrents to their success in a college program. By gaining this information, I hope that we at the college can make the necessary changes to be able to better serve and accommodate the students or the perspective students of the college.

The fourth reason I have for doing research on this particular topic is that whenever I have read research material that deals with adult learners, I have found that most, if not all, research was done in larger and more southern centers (in fact often in the United States), where the communities are more established, and the concerns and issues regarding the students of these studies may not be relevant to those of Fort Nelson. For example, in their article "Breaking Down Barriers", authors Mary A. Andrews and Mary E. Sills identify several barriers which exist for Black students in the United States. These include such things as insensitivity to cultural differences and a lack of minority staff, problems which may exist in Fort Nelson but rather than Blacks being the studied minority, students of Native ancestory would be have to be considered.

Similarily, authors Gordon G. Darkenwald and Sharan B. Merriam, in their book

Adult Education - Foundations of Practice , identify several factors that can act as barriers to an education for adult learners. These include such factors as insufficient finances, geographical isolation, and lack of transportation, interest, or daycare, all of which are certainly relevant to the adult learners of Fort Nelson. However, once again, the research information gained by Darkenwald and Merriam came largely from studies and sources within the United States, hence the possibility exists that some differences do exist for the adult students of a more northern and isolated community such as Fort Nelson.

Methods and Procedures

To carry out this research into perceived educational deterrents of adults learners in an isolated northern community, I feel the most appropriate approach is combination of a qualitative and quantitative method. My reasons for this are that a qualitative process allows for research to be conducted in a natural setting, where a multiple data gathering procedure is incorporated, and that in-depth and meaningful subject perspectives are obtained; while the quantitative approach allows for a more scientific compilation of collected data.

In addition to reading material about the value of qualitative and quantitative research, I also read material which covered such topics as how to structure survey and interview questions, how to collect and record data, and how to write up a research project. This information came from such articles as *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods* , edited by R.R. Sherman and R.D. Webb, *Writing Up Qualitative Research* by Harry F. Wolcott, and *Educational Evaluation* by B.R. Worthen and J.R. Sanders.

Regarding the subjects for this research project, I worked with students enrolled in full-time programs at Northern Lights College in Fort Nelson during the 1990/91 academic year. I selected only students attending full-time credit programs first because it was easy to identify these students, thus making it possible to obtain a high response from the surveys; second, these students represent a very good cross-section of the different

attributes of a student; and third, I felt that students attending continuing education or short courses would not be representative of the students who perceive there to be barriers or deterrents to their education, as they may not be subject to such things as daycare needs or lack of funds.

In order to compile data for this research project, I incorporated a student questionnaire (see Appendix 1) which was complemented by individual student interviews (see Appendix 2). For the questionnaire component of the research, I formulated five questions of a qualitative nature and provided between eight and eighteen possible responses in which the students were asked to respond to as many as applied to them. Furthermore, these possible responses are comprised of four categories; situational, institutional, informational, and psycho-social. Under the situational category, responses included such things as lack of daycare or transportation, shiftwork, and insufficient funding. In the area of institutional, possible responses included inconvenient schedules, poor instructors, confusion of registration procedures, and fear of college setting. Under the category of psycho-social, I included such possible responses as lack of interest, tired of school, program difficulty, and a drug and alcohol problem; while under the informational category, possible responses included lack of program information and not being familiar with college offerings.

I feel that by including possible responses from the areas of institutional, situational, informational, and psycho-social, I will gain a much better insight into the various areas that students perceive to be deterrents to education for the people of Fort Nelson. The benefits of organizing the questionaire responses in such a manner is two-fold. First, it provides a more organized and systematic way of providing many possible responses for the students; second, and more importantly, by having responses identified under these four categories, I will be much better prepared to identify where deterrents exist and will

therefore be able to take measures to correct the situation.

In addition to the possible responses that I provided, I also allotted space for the students to enter their own responses, for although I feel I covered a wide variety of possible deterrents, I realize many of the students will be able to identify barriers that I have not even considered. To complement this, I also included space for additional comments from the students, hoping that I might gain a more personal and qualitative perspective to feelings, beliefs, and concerns of these students. Finally, the questionnaire also included a variety of quantitative questions dealing with such items as age, program enrolled in, household income, and gender. My intention here is to take the opportunity to gather demographic information that may be useful in organizing future college programs or student recruitment campaigns.

Supplemental to the questionnaire component of the research project is an individual student interview. To do this, I compiled a series of five questions that would be asked of each student in a private recorded interview. My intentions for this aspect of the research was to allow the ten students, who were selected in an attempt to generate a cross-section of gender, age, program, and identified barriers, the opportunity to speak freely and completely about the variety of concerns and perceived barriers that are common to them and the students of Fort Nelson, thereby giving me a more qualitative insight into the barriers or perceived barriers of these northern students.

Finally, before proceeding with this research project, I took all possible ethical precautions, beginning with contacting the campus principal and discussing in detail the significance of the project and how we might utilize its findings to better meet the needs the college's students and prospective students. After receiving the support and approval from the campus principal, the student questionnaires were distributed with the

information regarding the intent, purpose, and confidentiality of the project being explained both in writing on each questionnaire and verbally by myself to each of the participants. Additionally, I informed students who voluntarily let their names stand as possible candidates for the interview segment of the project that their cooperation was on a voluntary basis and that information gained was to be used only for the sake of this research and the possible improvement of college's service to the students. All students were thanked for their time, effort, and consideration.

Findings

Tables 1 - 6 Demographic findings of the 'Survey for Determining Perceived Barriers of an Isolated Northern Community conducted at Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus.

Number of Students Surveyed - 40

Table 1 - Program

Program	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
Adult Basic Education	12	30.0%
Teacher Training	13	32.5%
Office Administration	6	15.0%
Forestry Crewperson	1	2.5%
University Transfer	5	12.5%
E.C.E./Teacher Aide	3	7.5%
Total	40	100.0%

Table 2 - Marital Status

Status	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
Single	11	27.5%
Married	17	42.5%
Common-Law	5	12.5%
Separated/Divorced	3	7.5%
No Response	4	10.0%
Total	40	100.0%

Table 3 - Number of Children

Number of Children	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
0	19	47.5%
1	5	12.5%
2	7	17.5%
3	5	12.5%
4	4	10.0%
5	0	0.0%
6 or more	0	0.0%
Total	40	100.0%

Table 4 - Gender

Gender	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
Female	33	82.5%
Male	7	17.5%
Total	40	100.0%

Table 5 - Age

Age	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
16 - 19	3	7.5%
20 - 24	8	20.0%
25 - 29	8	20.0%
30 - 34	6	15.0%
35 - 39	7	17.5%
40 - 44	5	12.5%
45 - 49	2	5.0%
50 or over	1	2.5%
Total	40	100.0%

Table 6 - Annual Household Income

Annual Household Income	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
Under $10,000	10	25.0%
$10,000 - $15,999	4	10.0%
$16,000 - $20,999	1	2.5%
$21,000 - $24,999	2	5.0%
$25,000 - $29,999	0	0.0%
$30,000 - $34,999	4	10.0%
$35,000 - $39,999	4	10.0%
$40,000 or over	12	30.0%
No response	3	7.5%
Total	40	100.0%

Summary of Data

Although the data from the demographic section of the survey may well be self-explanatory, I feel that some ot the information does warrant commentary. Of particular interest to me is the extremely high percentage of female students (82.5%), to the comparatively low enrollment of male students (17.5%) at the campus (see Table 4). The reason for this unbalanced ratio of female to male students could be the result of two factors. First, many of the full-time programs offered at the college, such as Office Administration, Early Childhood Education, or the elementary teacher training program, could be perceived in the community as female-oriented, while only the Forestry Crewperson or the Adult Basic Education programs offer something which could be considered as being male or male and female oriented. The second possible explanation for this large difference between male and female enrollment could be that in Fort Nelson, it is very easy for males to obtain a high-paying job without having a high school diploma, let alone any post-secondary education.

Another demographic area which is interesting to this college is the annual household income (see Table 6), for although a large percentage of students (30.0%) come from a household income of $40,000 or more, there is also a very high percentage of students (25.0%) that have an annual household income of under $10,000, indicating that the student body of Northern Lights College in Fort Nelson has students from both ends of the financial spectrum. The third segment of demographic information of interest to the college pertains to the number of students (47.5%) who indicated that they have no children (see Table 3), which is something that would have implications towards such barriers as daycare and student funding.

Key Points

- Very high percentage of female students (82.5%) compared to male students (17.5%).
- 25% of Northern Lights College students in Fort Nelson have an annual household income of $10,000 or less.

Tables 7 - 11 Results of 'Survey for Determining Perceived Barriers for Students of an Isolated Northern Community

Number of students surveyed - 40

Table 7 Barriers perceived to exist in Fort Nelson that may have prevented entrance into a College program

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage of Students Which Responded to Survey Option
Lack of confidence	13	32.5%
Lack of information on college programs	6	15.0%
Low regard for education	5	12.5%
Lack of support from family	5	12.5%
Lack of public transportation	4	10.0%
Ease of getting work	4	10.0%
Lack of daycare	3	7.5%
Drug or alcohol problem	2	5.0%
Other *	2	5.0%
No response to any option	16	40.0%
Total	60	

*** Student comments referring to the survey question 'What barriers do you perceive to exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now?' with the 'other' response option.**

- Insufficient courses
- Lack of encouragement

Student comments to 'What barriers do you perceive to exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a College program until now?'

- While on U.I.C., there was no eligible sponsorship from Manpower because of the C-21 Bill.
- I didn't want to give up working at the school.
- The stories of unqualified and incompetent staff.
- We moved here as my husband could get work easily and I could take advantage of the AHCOTE [teacher training program]. People living here don't realize the tough economic realities of Southern B.C. No education limits you to a minimum wage job!
- No suitable courses.
- Jobs of low level education are easy to come by and deceive people of the value of education versus the easy money.
- Didn't know what to do. It's a personal thing - - nothing to do with the college itself.
- Would have entered earlier but I was not living here.

Table 8 What could the college do that would remove perceived barriers to adult learners of an isolated northern community?

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage of Students Which Responded to Survey Option
Information on financial assistance	22	55.0%
Reduction of tuition	17	42.5%
Assistance with daycare	16	40.0%
More useful course offerings	15	37.5%
More qualified or competent staff	9	22.5%
Clarify entrance requirements	8	20.0%
More promotion of college & courses	6	15.0%
Available student housing	6	15.0%
Others	* 4	10.0%
Better orientation	3	7.5%
No response to any option	3	7.5%
Total	109	

*** Student comments referring to the question ' What could the college do that would remove perceived barriers to adult learners of an isolated northern community?' that responded with the 'other' option.**

- Book fees
- Reduce book prices
- Put an art room of some kind, something to break the monotony

Student comments referring to the question 'What could the College do that would remove perceived barriers ?'

- Offer more scholarships, bursaries, and know how a person can get them.
- Also, there needs to be more information on what is available here through Distance Education, through teleconference, correspondence etc.
- One of the most attractive aspects, I feel, is the convenience of small town advantages . . . small class size, individual attention, and not a lot of prerequisites or high marks required, no elimination procedures due to limited class size, standards, and time should be available to people who think that big is better.
- It seems easier to return to school than ever before - - opportunity and financing.
- I think the most difficulty is finding out what is out there and then how to get there.
- Offer a few more actual classes for each subject so as not to have to cram to get on schedule. Hire more staff so instructors work load is not so heavy and students expect miracles from an overloaded teacher.
- Offering interest and/or aptitude testing would probably draw a lot of people in. There's a lot of confused people out there.
- For me it's the timing - not specific barriers.

Table 9 Reasons or barriers that may have caused students to drop out of school or College

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage of Students Which Responded to Survey Option
Lack of self-confidence	8	20.0%
Family obligations	7	17.5%
Obtained work	6	15.0%
Lack of funding	6	15.0%
Lack of interest	4	10.0%
Lack of support of family	4	10.0%
Others	* 3	7.5%
Poor instructors	2	5.0%
Difficulty of program	2	5.0%
Lack of a need for education	1	2.5%
Drug or alcohol problem	2	5.0%
Lack of transportation	1	2.5%
Lack of daycare	0	0.0%
Inconvenient schedules	0	0.0%
Lack of useful/relevant courses	0	0.0%
Low literacy level	0	0.0%
No response	20	50.0%
Total	66	

*** Student comments referring to the survey question 'If you attended school or college in the past and dropped-out, what do feel was the reason for this?' with the 'Other' option.**

- Financial difficulties
- Death of parents
- Personal

Student comments referring to the question 'If you attended school or College in the past and "dropped out", what do you feel was the reason for this?'

- Reasons for dropping out of school in high school - - family separation, etc.
- Shit happens.
- Lack of relevance (teen years) - - I was damaged by school I think!
- No one ever told me what was out there or that I could do it.
- Not dropped out.
- Was thrown out of school.

Table 10 Major reasons for a delay in entering a College program

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage of Students Which Responded to Survey Option
Lack of financial support	23	57.5%
Working	18	45.0%
Family obligations	14	35.0%
Lack of self-confidence	13	32.5%
Geographical isolation	7	17.5%
Inconvenient schedules	6	15.0%
Improper preparation for college	6	15.0%
Lack of interest	4	10.0%
Tired of school	4	10.0%
Lack of support from family	4	10.0%
Lack of a need for education	2	5.0%
Lack of useful/relevant courses	2	5.0%
Lack of transportation	2	5.0%
Confusion over registration policy	1	2.5%
Fear of college setting	1	2.5%
Lack of college/course information	1	2.5%
Others	* 1	2.5%
Lack of daycare	0	0.0%
Drug or alcohol problem	0	0.0%
No response to any option	8	20.0%
Total	117	

*** Student responses referring to the survey question 'If you have delayed entering a College program, what do you consider to be the major reasons for the delay?' with the 'Other' option.**

- Lack of necessary course

Student comments to the question 'If you delayed entering a College program, what do you consider to be major reasons for the delay?'

- Not quite sure what I wanted to "become" (careerwise) in order to spend years in school.
- Moving here made it more possible.
- A lot of moving.
- Inability to decide what to take.
- Haven't delayed entering any college programs.

Table 11- Items which could prevent students from achieving success in College

Response Option	Number of Responses	Percentage of Students Which Responded to Survey Option
Lack of funding	16	40.0%
Family obligations	12	30.0%
Inconvenient schedules	8	20.0%
Lack of daycare	7	17.5%
Work opportunities	6	15.0%
Poor instruction	6	15.0%
Lack of self-confidence	6	15.0%
Lack of support from family	4	10.0%
Lack of interest	3	7.5%
Course difficulty	2	5.0%
Lack of transportation	2	5.0%
Uncomfortable with college setting	1	2.5%
Education is a low priority	1	2.5%
Others	* 1	2.5%
Drug or alcohol problem	0	0.0%
No response to any option	9	22.5%
Total	84	

*** Student comments referring to the survey question 'What barriers, if any, do you perceive to exist that could keep you from achieving success in your program of study?' with the 'Other' option.**

- Insufficient courses

Student comments to the question 'What barriers, if any, do you perceive to exist that could keep you from achieving success in your program of study?'

- Lack of financial support.
- Not having the required credits in order to enter the AHCOTE [teacher training] program to enroll in September. Not having sufficient funding - - if that 's the case, I'll just have to return to work.
- None, I'll make it now.
- None - - I'm reaching for the stars.
- Lack of appropriate course offerings.
- hard to live on monies given as costs are so high here, especially meat, etc. But with national debt, it is hard to expect too much.
- Biggest problem is available FINANCES!!!

Summary of Data

When studying the quantitative data acquired from the student survey as well as the qualitative information gained from the written responses, some insightful and revealing pieces of information are conveyed.

To begin with, in the area of barriers that are perceived to exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have prevented students from entering a college program (see Table 7), barriers which fall under the heading of psycho-social came to the forefront. This includes such items as: lack of self-confidence (32.5%), low regard for education (12.5%), and lack of family support (12.5%). This data very much supports the findings of adult educational researchers such as Darkenwald and Merriam, who in their book *Adult Education*, point out that such factors as lack of self- confidence and support from family or friends aids to the fear of failure or the notion that education may not be relevant to their needs (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982, p. 140).

Another area of interest when considering barriers that may exist in the community is shown by number of responses to a lack of information on college programs (15.0%). This would be considered an information barrier and could be applied to both the college and the community, in that the college is not adequately promoting itself or its programs; or that because the community of Fort Nelson is so transient and that shiftwork is so dominant, that members of the community are unable to become properly familiar with the college.

Finally, when considering factors which are situational to the people of Fort Nelson, I find the responses to be surprisingly low. Factors such as lack of public transportation (10.0%) and lack of daycare (7.5%), are all factors which I believed could have been

major barriers for students in Fort Nelson prior to collecting this data. However, when the number of students which do not have children (47.5%) is considered, a factor such as the lack of daycare does not appear quite such a dominant of a factor.

To go along with the perceived barriers which may exist in the community of Fort Nelson, data reflecting the major reasons why students delayed in entering a college program until now are evident (see Table 10). Similar to Table 7, this segment of the survey also identified factors such as institutional, situational, informative, and psycho-social. However, in this portion, situational barriers came to the forefront, particularly factors such as lack of financial support (57.5%), working (45.0%), and family obligations (35.0%). The two factors of lacking financial support and working which are identified by this study, correspond closely with findings by Johnstone and Rivera (Johnstone and Rivera, cited by Merriam and Darkenwald, 1982, p.140), where they found in their study in 1972, that 53% of the respondents indicated that finances were a major barrier to their education.

However, situational barriers were not the only concern identified by this survey, Once again, psycho-social barriers were prominent, in particular a lack of self-confidence (32.5%), which was followed by such factors as lack of interest (10.0%), lack of support from family and friends (10.0%), and being tired of school (10.0%). What is also of interest in this segment of the survey is that institutional and informational factors, items which could be attributed directly to the college itself, received very little consideration, with only inconvenient schedules (15.0%) and a lack of useful or relevant courses (5.0%) obtaining any significant response.

Table 9 reflects information gained through responses to the reasons or barriers that may have caused students to drop out of school or college, while Table 11 identifies items

which could prevent students from achieving success in their current college program. Similar to the previous segments, both of these sections also identified factors as either situational, institutional, or psycho-social. Under the section of reasons or barriers which may have caused a student to drop, factors under the psycho-social area were prominent, and once again, lack of self-confidence (20.0%) was a dominant factor. This was followed by lack of interest (10.0%) and lack of family support (10.0%). And similar to the previous findings, factors which reflected the students' situation were also identified as being major factors to students dropping out in the past, in particular, family obligations (17.5%), ease obtaining work (15.0%), and lack of funding (15.0%).

One more bit of data which warrants consideration is the high percentage of students (50.0%) who gave no response to any of the items available in this section. This could possibly represent one of two things: either there is a large number of the student body which completed its schooling, or that various students were unwilling to identify their reasons for dropping out.

Similar to the section on identifying reasons why students may have dropped out of school or college in the past, the portion of the survey which identified items which could prevent students from achieving success in their current college program also showed factors which were either situational, institutional, or psycho-social. Under the heading of psycho-social deterrents, lack of self-confidence (15.0%) and lack of interest (7.5%) were the most dominant factors. However, in the areas of situational and institutional factors, the responses were even higher as to which items could prevent students from completing their current program of study.

Under the situational heading, lack of funding (40.0%) was the top response; this was followed by family obligations (30.0%), and work opportunities (15.0%). The high

percentage of students who indicated that lack of funding was a problem is a strong reflection on the high number of students who exist on a very low annual household income (see Table 6), and is further supported by the number of students who indicated that work opportunities could prevent them from completing their programs. The case of the students who indicated that family obligations could be a barrier to their success is supported by the large number of students who have families (see Table 3), which not only places more responsibilities at home, but also adds additional financial stress.

In summary, the factors which were identified by this survey as being barriers, either perceived or real, are very similar to those factors which have been identified by various adult education researchers such as Andrew, Sills, Darkenwald, and Merriam.

Key Points

- Major barrier to most students entering a college program or not completing their college program is due to lack of sufficient funding.
- Lack of self-confidence is also seen as a major barrier for many students in entering a college program.
- Factors identified by students in Fort Nelson as being barriers to their education are very similar to those barriers identified by other researchers studying adult learners.

Summary of Data (Interviews)

To supplement the quantitative data I collected from the student surveys with qualitative information, I conducted interviews on eight of the students who responded to the survey (see Appendix 2). My intentions for these interviews were to give students the opportunity to go into more depth regarding the concerns they might have about the community of Fort Nelson, their education, and the college.

Upon review of the student interviews, three points arise which support and enhance the data gained through the students' survey. First, student once again voiced their concerns about the lack of relevant or useful courses which are currently offered in Fort Nelson and that the consequences of this was that students are forced to take some of their coursework through correspondence. The second point to come across in the interviews was the problem with funding -- which included items such as problems with student loans, lack of scholarships and bursaries, and difficulty with funding agencies such as Canada Manpower and the Ministry of Social Services. In both of these cases, the information from the interview very much supports the quantitative data of the survey regarding these two items. However, the third point provided by the interviews concerns students' feeling toward the college, both in the quality of service that the college offers, and in the programs that it offers. Thus, even though students have concerns regarding the number of course offerings, many still feel fortunate to have a college which offers as much as this one does, even to the point where students have moved to the community to attend college.

Key Points

- Lack of relevant course offerings is a concern in Fort Nelson.
- Problems with student funding once again came to the forefront.
- Many students are appreciative of what the college has to offer.
- Information from the interviews is very supportive of the data contained within the survey.

Discussion of Findings

In doing this research project, I attempted to identify barriers, either perceived or real, that adult learners of the isolated northern community of Fort Nelson may encounter. To accomplish this, I collected quantitative and qualitative data via a student survey which identified possible barriers from four different areas. These four areas included factors which are considered to be situational, institutional, informative, and psycho-social. To enhance this aspect of the data, I also conducted interviews with 20% of the students I surveyed, thereby gaining a more personal insight to the concerns of the students of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus.

In examining the data I collected from the surveys and student interviews, some interesting and enlightening pieces of information evolved. To begin with, the institutional and informational barriers were items which, by and large, the college itself had some direct effect on -- either by doing or not doing something about the barriers. For instance, feedback from the survey indicates that more information is needed regarding financial assistance (see Table 8) so that students might be able to better cope with cost of tuition, books, and the funding of their education programs in general. This is something which definitely warrants consideration when as many as 57.5% of the students surveyed (see Tables 9, 10, and 11) as well as many of the students who were interviewed consider the lack of funding as a barrier to their education.

In addition to the lack of information regarding funding being seen as a barrier, the lack of proper information about the college and its programs was also identified by the survey (see Tables 7 and 8). The importance of this information is that it may reflect two things: first, because the community is by nature very transient, we at the college must do more to make new members of the community aware that the college exists; second, not all survey respondents were newer members of the community, and therefore it is very possible that the college must consider its advertising and promotional schemes in the future.

The other area in which the operating of the college is reflected directly is that of institutional barriers. From this area, four factors came to the forefront from the survey and from the interviews, these being reduction of tuition, inconvenient schedules, more useful or relevant courses, and concerns with instructors, (see Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11). Unfortunately, from an institution's perspective, there is very little that the college can do regarding the cost of tuition; however, with the addressing of better information for financial assistance, coupled with creative payment schemes, this problem may be reduced in the future.

I feel that the factor of inconvenient schedules being a deterrent to an adult's education reflects both upon the college and upon the community of Fort Nelson. In the case of the college, inconvenient schedules are a result of attempting to accommodate as many people as possible from the community for college programs, and having only a limited amount of resources in terms of instructors. The consequence of this is that many courses are forced to run through the dinner hour, to not coincide with the public system (which brings about the problems of daycare), and to run many courses in the evening. To complicate matters, much of the community of Fort Nelson operates on shiftwork, hence with the swings in shifts, many students and would-be students are forced to miss

courses.

Another institutional factor which is fostered by both the college and the community of Fort Nelson is that of not having enough useful or relevant courses. This is an item which was quite prominent in the survey as well as in the interview (however, most people did indicate that they could appreciate the situation) and is one which is the result of campus size as well as the distance the campus is away from major centers. In the case of size, a small campus does not have the availability of qualified instructors, nor does it have a sufficient demand to meet the administrative costs which are incurred by offering various courses. These two factors are further enhanced by the distance that Fort Nelson is from other major centers, as neither instructors nor students can be brought in to alleviate the situation.

Finally, the perceived barrier pertaining to the lack of competent instructors warrants discussion. This barrier, like the ones mentioned above, is a result of both the college as an institution and also because of where the community of Fort Nelson is located. Fort Nelson is a very northern and isolated community, and although it may offer a great deal to those who seek adventure, to many individuals, college instructors included, the thought of six months of snow and being miles away from the amenities which a larger community has to offer keeps many good instructors away, or makes the career of the ones that do come to Fort Nelson fairly short. Consequently, the instructor turnover is approximately 25% per year, and some new ones may be considered as good, some as poor. However, because the campus and the community are small, poorer aspects of the college or of its staff can be intensified or exaggerated.

Regarding barriers which reflect the students' situation, funding, or the lack of it was unquestionably the most dominant item to in the survey (see Tables 10 and 11) and in the

interviews. This comes as no surprise, as numerous researchers such as Robert Smith, Delworth and Hanson, and Darkenwald and Merriam, point out in their books that funding for education is major barrier and concern for students wishing continue or complete their education. To go along with this situational barrier, the previously mentioned factor of a lack of information regarding student becomes even more relevant.

However, financial factors are not the only situational barrier which these students face, as family obligations (see Tables 10 and 11) and to lesser extent, problems with daycare (see Table 8) were also items which are perceived to be barriers to students of Fort Nelson in continuing or completing their education. This, also like the situational barrier of problems with student funding, is realized by various researchers as being problem for students whether they live in a major urban center or in an isolated one such as Fort Nelson.

The final situational barrier that warrants discussion for the response it received in the survey and in the interview, is that of students returning to work or for students not beginning a program because they were working. As Burghardt points out in Smith's book *Learning to Learn Across the Lifespan*, it is quite common for students, particularly students of Adult Basic Education, to drop out and enter low-level employment (Burghardt, cited by Smith, 1990, p. 250); however, what makes the situation in Fort Nelson slightly different from many communities is the ease of getting work (see Tables 7, 9, and 11), which is illustrated by the survey responses and from some of the interviews. The implication of this fact is that as long as Fort Nelson remains economically strong, people will place a low value on education and will continue to enter the workforce at the expense of completing or furthering their education.

Regarding factors that are considered to be of the psycho-social realm, only two items

were identified as being major barriers to students' education, these being lack of self-confidence and lack of support from family or friends. These factors, like most of the ones already discussed, are not just relevant to students in a smaller and more isolated community such as Fort Nelson, as once again educational researchers, in particular, Darkenwald and Merriam emphasize how significant the "fear of failure syndrome" (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982, p. 140) can be in impeding an individual's education.

Summary

This research project regarding what barriers exist for adult learners of a small, isolated northern community, was conducted for four significant reasons. First, we at the college (the administration and instructional staff) wished to gain an insight into how well our courses and programs are meeting the needs of the people of Fort Nelson. Second, I wished to gain an insight into what external forces may exist in a community such as Fort Nelson that can act as deterrents to adult learners in the meeting of their educational goals. The third reason why this project was significant was because of the community of Fort Nelson itself; a community which is economically strong and culturally diverse, and thus perhaps different from other communities of the same size in more a southern location. The fourth reason for conducting this project was due to the fact that virtually all of the research material I had read regarding adult learners, dealt with students from larger and more southern communities; and I wished to find out if factors which may exist for students in larger centers are relevant to students in a community such as Fort Nelson.

Upon completion of the project and the reviewing of the data, I feel that this research project very successful in relation to the reasons why it was conducted. In the area of wanting feedback about programs offered at Northern Lights College, it has been shown that although students are pleased with what we have offered and are attempting to offer in the future, there is still a concern for some students who must take courses through correspondence in order to meet their educational requirements. In regards to identifying

external forces which can act as deterrents to adult learners of Fort Nelson, the research once again provided much insight about such factors as lack of funding or lack of self-confidence, which can be impassable barriers for adult learners.

In the area of providing information about how the diverse community of Fort Nelson affects adult learners, the research once again proved to be fruitful, as ease of getting high-paying work in Fort Nelson was a barrier identified in both the survey and the interviews, aptly showing that Fort Nelson itself does provide a situational barrier to the learners of this community. Finally, the research project was very successful in providing information regarding barriers to adult learners that is relevant to the students of smaller and more isolated communities such as Fort Nelson. But perhaps even more important than this, is that this project illustrated the fact that adult learners in small communities share the same barriers, such as lack of funding, lack of self-confidence, or family obligations, as those adult learners in larger and more southern centers.

For these reasons, I believe the research project was useful and successful; however, rather than the project stopping here, it must now be taken one step further. To do this, we at the college must take the various pieces of information regarding what adult learners perceive to be barriers to their education, and implement plans of action that will reduce or eliminate barriers such as lack of funding, of self-confidence, or useful or relevant courses. This may include better promotion of the college and its courses, implementation of a financial aid strategy, or the conducting of workshops to assist students in enhancing their self-confidence; but whatever action will be taken, we now have an insight into what the adult learners of a small, isolated northern community perceive to be as barriers to their education.

Critique

While I deem this research project to be a success in providing me useful information about what adult learners perceive as barriers to their education, I feel there were a couple of aspects regarding this project that could have done differently that may have enhanced the quality of the project's outcome.

To begin with, the student sample I used for conducting this research project consisted of forty students, and although this represents a large percentage of the full-time student body, it is still quite small sample for collecting quantitative data. In addition to this, I involved only students attending full-time credit programs at the college and while this did give a good cross-section of students, it did not represent the numerous potential students which exist in Fort Nelson who have not yet been able to overcome their barriers to enter college, and therefore not all possible barriers may have been identified.

The one other area where I feel this project may be slightly inadequate, is in the area of reference materials. In doing this project, I discovered something I am sure many of the students have already found out from living in and going to school in an isolated community such as Fort Nelson -- that being that it is very difficult to gain access to the variety of educational journals and reference books which exist in the larger and more southern communities and colleges. Thus, in doing this research, I to discovered barriers to my educational goals.

However, despite these shortfalls, I believe this project was useful as it gave me a good opportunity to work firsthand with students and gain an insight to the numerous barriers which hampered many of them in entering college, as well as being better able to understand the barriers they face every day in completing their program. However, I do feel that with this information, we at the college will be able to take measures so that these barriers will be less of hinderance to future adult learners of the isolated northern community of Fort Nelson.

Appendix #1

SURVEY FOR DETERMINING PERCEIVED BARRIERS FOR STUDENTS OF AN ISOLATED NORTHERN COMMUNITY

Thank-you for participating in this survey which is attempting to identify the perceived barriers of adult learners who live in an isolated northern community. The information that is gathered from this survey will be used by the college to attempt to provide a better service, and to reduce the perceived barriers of the students in the Fort Nelson area. It will also be used as the basis for a research project in a graduate program at the University of Oregon. Because of this, your honesty is appreciated, and please be assured that all information will be held in strict confidence.

The program that you are enrolled in is:

___ Adult Basic Education
___ E.C.E./Teacher Aide
___ AHCOTE (Teacher Training)
___ Career Preparation
___ Office Administration
___ Forestry Crewperson
___ University Transfer

You are:

___ Female
___ Male

___ Single
___ Married
___ Common-Law
___ Separated/Divorced

Your age range is from:

___ 16 - 19
___ 20 - 24
___ 25 - 29
___ 30 - 34
___ 35 - 39
___ 40- 44
___ 45 - 49
___ 50 or over

Your annual household income is:

___ Under $10,000
___ $10,000 - $15,999
___ $16,000 - $20,999
___ $21,000 - $24,999
___ $25,000 - $29,999
___ $30,000 - $34,999
___ $35,000 - $39,999
___ $40,000 or over

If you are a parent, how many children are in your household ___.

1. **In your opinion, what do you feel the college could do that would remove the perceived barriers that stop people from entering a college program? (Check as many as apply to you)**

___ Orientation of college programs
___ Information on financial assistance
___ Offering of more attractive or useful courses
___ Reduction in confusion over college and program entrance
___ Other _____

___ Assistance with daycare
___ More promotion of college programs
___ More qualified or competent staff
___ Student housing availability
___ Reduction of course fees

Comments _____
_____
_____

2. **What barriers do you perceive to exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now? (Check as many as apply to you)**

___ Lack of public transportation
___ Lack of daycare
___ Ease of getting work
___ Lack of information about college programs
___ Other _____

___ Low regard for education
___ Lack of support from family/friends
___ Influence of drugs or alcohol
___ Lack of confidence in ability

Comments _____
_____
_____

3. **If you attended school or college in the past and "dropped out", what do you feel was the reason for this? (Check as many as apply to you)**

___ Lack of transportation
___ Lack of daycare
___ Lack of funding (cost of program)
___ Family obligations
___ Obtained work
___ Inconvenient schedules
___ Poor instructors
___ Other _____

___ Lack of useful courses
___ Lack of interest
___ Lack of self-confidence in ability
___ Level of difficulty of program
___ Lack of support of family/friends
___ Lack of a need for education
___ Drug or alcohol problems
___ Low literacy level

Comments _____
_____
_____

4. **If you have delayed entering a college program, what do you consider to be major reasons for the delay? (Check as many as apply to you)**

___ Lack of transportation
___ Lack of daycare
___ Geographical isolation
___ Working
___ Lack of financial support
___ Family obligations
___ Improper preparation for college
___ Inconvenient schedules
___ Lack of attractive or useful courses education
___ Confusion of college registration policies
___ Other _____

___ Fear of college setting
___ Lack of college or program information
___ Lack of interest
___ Tired of school
___ Lack of self-confidence in academic ability
___ Lack of support from family/friends
___ Lack of a need for

___ Drug or alcohol problems

Comments _____
_____
_____

5. What barriers, if any, do you perceive to exist that could keep you from achieving success in your program of study?
(Check as many as apply to you)

___ Lack of transportation
___ Lack of daycare
___ Lack of funding/course fees
___ Family obligations
___ Work opportunities
___ Inconvenient schedules
___ Poor instruction
___ Uncomfortable with being in college
___ Lack of interest
___ Lack of self-confidence
___ Level of course difficulty
___ Lack of support from family/friends
___ Low priority for the need of education
___ Problems with drugs or alcohol
___ Other _____

Comments _____
_____
_____

Please print your name and phone number below if you would be available for a short personal interview regarding some of these issues. Thank-you.

_____ Phone number _____

Appendix # 2

Interviews

#1
Female
Age: 35-40

1. Please identify any barriers that you feel exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now and explain why these were barriers for you.

But there weren't any, because I came here and started it, the AHCOTE teacher training program, so moving here made it possible actually to start the program. But I think I would separate the college program from the AHCOTE program.

2. Please identify any concerns, barriers, or events of a personal nature that may have delayed you from entering a college program until now and explain why these caused you a delay.

Before I couldn't do it because I didn't have the money and we always lived in small places and this is the first place that offered teacher training through a college. And I wouldn't have taken any other programs at this college or any other college. So I don't think there are any barriers.

3. As a student in an isolated northern community, what barriers do you perceive to exist in Fort Nelson that may not exist in larger and southern communities?

Well I think that Fort Nelson is unique in that it offers the AHCOTE program. But the only difficulty with it is that because of the distance from the universities, it narrows your options, but then there were no options in any of the other communities that I lived in. It means that I have to take history, English, or psych, or senior level courses by correspondence, and I can't do science labs. And the math department at SFU, that is inward- looking, makes it difficult to take the courses unless your are there. So it has limited the options.

4. As a student of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus, what barriers if any, do you perceive to exist that may prevent you from completing your program of study and

why would these cause you not to complete?

Well, just that those senior level courses are going to be hard to get. But I don't really see it as a problem because you know by having the first two years made available means that you are so far along the way that it is not a sacrifice to take correspondence and you have the confidence by then, and you have people that help, like you, and that I know that I can come here and get help, and you can nearly see the light at the end of the tunnel, so you are willing to do a year of correspondence. But again, it is the options thing.

5. In your opinion, what could the college do that would make your entering college and completing your program of study easier?

Nothing. No I think it is really a great thing. I know that people think it would be nice to have all kind of services everywhere they went. But there is price to pay for living in a small place and I think that Fort Nelson makes that price small.

#2
Female
Age 20-25

1. Please identify any barriers that you feel exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now and explain why these were barriers for you.

None, I feel that there are no barriers in the community that would stop me from entering college. The college is here and I wanted to enroll. It would be different if there was no college in this town.

2. Please identify any concerns, barriers, or events of a personal nature that may have delayed you from entering a college program until now and explain why these caused you a delay.

Um, personal being that I wasn't sure what courses or programs I wanted to take at the time. So I worked first so that I could get a feel for what career I would like to take schooling in. Other than that, I didn't have any personal or serious barriers that would have kept me from school.

3. As a student in an isolated northern community, what barriers do you perceive to exist in Fort Nelson that may not exist in larger and southern communities?

Probably having no outlets for people to do -- there's no movie theatre and only two bars downtown, there's the tennis courts and stuff, but there is a limit as to what you can do in this town. Within the college, it is the correspondence courses -- it might not be like that for university transfer courses, but for ABE correspondence courses, I don't like it -- I do really like my instructed courses, but not the correspondence.

4. As a student of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus, what barriers if any, do you perceive to exist that may prevent you from completing your program of study and why would these cause you not to complete?

It would be whether or not I get my student loan. That's the only thing that could stop me from completing my program.

5. In your opinion, what could the college do that would make your entering college and completing your program of study easier?

Nothing -- I didn't have any problem at all. It went like I thought it would.

#3
Female
Age 25-30

1. Please identify any barriers that you feel exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now and explain why these were barriers for you.

There were no barriers. We had been here only five months before I started the Office Administration program.

2. Please identify any concerns, barriers, or events of a personal nature that may have delayed you from entering a college program until now and explain why these caused you a delay.

Finances of course. Second, choice of what I wanted to do -- I needed more time to really figure out what it was that I wanted to do.

3. As a student in an isolated northern community, what barriers do you perceive to exist in Fort Nelson that may not exist in larger and southern communities?

The choice -- being able to really have a wide variety of courses. You can take bits and pieces of various programs, but not always the whole program.

4. As a student of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus, what barriers if any, do you perceive to exist that may prevent you from completing your program of study and why would these cause you not to complete?

I will be completing my program in a while, so it does not really apply. However, I think for others, finances is a big concern. Also, because of where Fort Nelson is, student housing would be very beneficial in drawing students here.

5. In your opinion, what could the college do that would make your entering college and completing your program of study easier?

I had no complaints. The cost was reasonable and you guys are willing to lean a little for us if need be.

 # 4
Male
Age 40-45

1. Please identify any barriers that you feel exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now and explain why these were barriers for you.

One thing was the cost and I didn't know what kind of courses were offered here. Plus, I never thought of it before -- but there's nothing within the community that really stops a person. Although the lack of student housing does hurt a little.

2. Please identify any concerns, barriers, or events of a personal nature that may have delayed you from entering a college program until now and explain why these caused you a delay.

I didn't know what courses were offered and then, when I found out, there was the getting the financial part straightened out -- but I found out.

3. As a student in an isolated northern community, what barriers do you perceive to exist in Fort Nelson that may not exist in larger and southern communities?

There's not much recreation -- there's no gym at the college and the shop facilities are really minimal.

4. As a student of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus, what barriers if any, do you perceive to exist that may prevent you from completing your program of study and why would these cause you not to complete?

Work could be one, but I don't think it will be a barrier. And unemployment, you've got to watch them closely because they switch awfully quick.

5. In your opinion, what could the college do that would make your entering college and completing your program of study easier?

Lengthen the courses to more time. The math and the physics takes a lot of time, even if you work at it all of the time. But I do like the tutoring and the small classes, and because the campus is quite small, you get enough attention from the instructors.

#5
Female
Age 25-30

1. Please identify any barriers that you feel exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now and explain why these were barriers for you.

There were no barriers in Fort Nelson because I moved here to go to school. There were lots of barriers in Salmon Arm, but none here. But I can see barriers here for other people, such as the high job rate in this town -- people figure they don't need the

education to get a job. And people don't value education because of the number of jobs. People in this town don't have a clue what it's like down south where McDonald's is your option.

2. Please identify any concerns, barriers, or events of a personal nature that may have delayed you from entering a college program until now and explain why these caused you a delay.

Because I had a family and my top priority was going to be my children until they were old enough to not really need me. As they got into the intermediate grades, they stopped wanting me to hang around, so I felt it was time for me to go back to school.

3. As a student in an isolated northern community, what barriers do you perceive to exist in Fort Nelson that may not exist in larger and southern communities?

The main one, of course, is the number of courses which are offered here, which isn't so bad now that I am used to going back to school, so I don't mind stepping into a distance education course where I wouldn't have done that last year. But though OLI and SFU, there are lots of courses available.

4. As a student of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus, what barriers if any, do you perceive to exist that may prevent you from completing your program of study and why would these cause you not to complete?

Oh I'm sure there are none, unless it's a life or death situation with one of my immediate family members -- but I can't see myself not finishing now.

5. In your opinion, what could the college do that would make your entering college and completing your program of study easier?

Umm -- I don't know. I know when I started I was a stranger in the community and I went through some pretty rough times, but I don't think that anybody could have helped me. You guys are always pretty good and available to help. But I have talked to a lot of people in this town who have wanted to come back to school but they are too scared and I don't know what would alleviate that problem Some of them are working, but not at high paying jobs. I try telling people that they get smarter with age, but there don't seem to be enough role models in this town. In fact, there's a 52% drop out rate in the schools.

#6
Male
Age 20-25

1. Please identify any barriers that you feel exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now and explain why these were barriers for you.

I didn't really have any barriers for getting in. The thing that I had was that I graduated

in 87 and having to go through it again was a barrier in itself. But I realize that if that was what I had to do -- that was what I had to do. But the town itself gave me no barriers.

2. Please identify any concerns, barriers, or events of a personal nature that may have delayed you from entering a college program until now and explain why these caused you a delay.

I guess guidance when I was younger and my G.P.A. wasn't good, and to be honest, I didn't know that if your G.P.A. was that low that you could still go to college. I thought that colleges and universities were much the same and I guess funding and stuff like that was difficult to get. And the paperwork and stuff was a bit of a hassle.

3. As a student in an isolated northern community, what barriers do you perceive to exist in Fort Nelson that may not exist in larger and southern communities?

I think the lack of courses. But I think a lot of the smaller campuses base their courses around the needs of the community. The college has to go along with the community, and that limits the course offerings.

4. As a student of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus, what barriers if any, do you perceive to exist that may prevent you from completing your program of study and why would these cause you not to complete?

Well, like I said previously, the college in town doesn't offer the programs that I need to continue my education, like in the arts or drafting. So that delays me in getting my education completed.

5. In your opinion, what could the college do that would make your entering college and completing your program of study easier?

Offering more courses. But not even that, because when I saw that Northern Lights College is made up of several campuses, I thought maybe it would be possible to offer more programs through correspondence by using the instructors from the larger campuses.

#7
Female
Age 30 -35

1. Please identify any barriers that you feel exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now and explain why these were barriers for you.

It wasn't because of the community, it was because I had kids. It was expensive for daycare and it was hard to find a babysitter.

2. Please identify any concerns, barriers, or events of a personal nature that may have delayed you from entering a college program until now and explain why these caused you a delay.

Work and getting enough time to come back to school.

3. As a student in an isolated northern community, what barriers do you perceive to exist in Fort Nelson that may not exist in larger and southern communities?

There are more opportunities if you are living in Vancouver then if you are living up here for sure. A lot more money down south for students -- money can get tight up here.

4. As a student of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus, what barriers if any, do you perceive to exist that may prevent you from completing your program of study and why would these cause you not to complete?

Not anything that I can think of.

5. In your opinion, what could the college do that would make your entering college and completing your program of study easier?

A little bit more lenient on not having to be here all of the time. It's tough to get things arranged at home sometimes and then to make it to school.

#8
Male
Age 35 - 40

1. Please identify any barriers that you feel exist in the community of Fort Nelson that may have stopped you from entering a college program until now and explain why these were barriers for you.

There wasn't much support at first, but social services gave me the chance and I took advantage of it.

2. Please identify any concerns, barriers, or events of a personal nature that may have delayed you from entering a college program until now and explain why these caused you a delay.

The stigma that if a woman is a single parent, she has a lot of support. But if a man is a single parent, he still has to go out and bring home the bacon and still the mother. For me, it was getting to be too much and I was starting to come apart. Then when they offered this chance to me, it was a relief as it gave me a direction. It's hard to do it without some kind of help and my pride wouldn't let me do it.

3. As a student in an isolated northern community, what barriers do you perceive to exist in Fort Nelson that may not exist in larger and southern communities?

Well, we don't have quite the opportunities at the college, but they are adding on to meet the needs of the people and it's getting better. I think that Fort Nelson is a better place to study than down south and we seem to have pretty special instructors here and you get a more personalized education here that you wouldn't get down south. I think that it's an

advantage to go here.

4. As a student of Northern Lights College, Fort Nelson campus, what barriers if any, do you perceive to exist that may prevent you from completing your program of study and why would these cause you not to complete?

Mostly the barriers are ones that I have put up and when I deal with them -- there won't be any barriers.

5. In your opinion, what could the college do that would make your entering college and completing your program of study easier?

Just supplying the instructors with a little less work. Instructors here are so busy, that sometimes you don't want to bother them, they are just too tired, and that slowed me down a bit.

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